

# caloosahatchee river citizens association

## NEWSLETTER

This first Newsletter of the RIVER GROUP is to let you know that we haven't been idle all these many months. The Executive Committee has been meeting monthly trying to organize and set priorities. Many volunteers have already been active in attending Sub-committee meetings in the Technical, and Project and Events areas.

We can now be reached through the INFO Network in Fort Myers. If you have a question or need some information on membership, meeting or event dates, please call 433-INFO (4636) -- when this answers, just press ((2722) and choose from the menu. We especially want to thank Phil Croke, President, of the Information Network For Southwest Florida for donating this wonderful service.

The Executive Committee recently attended a workshop covering the Interline Server provided by Lee County Electric Coop. This service has been available to their subscribers for free but starting in September, a fee of \$4.95 per month or \$49.50 per year will be applicable. A Demo mode is available free of charge (not full service) for a full calendar month. Since this provides local bulletin board service to any user, we thought our membership could utilize this service to communicate between members. Eventually, we can create a RIVER data base and utilize the system's Forum and Library services. If you're interested, please call Interline Accounting, Lee County Electric at 656-2201. If you're interested in working on creating a RIVER data base, please call Don Skiba, at 995-8075. Don is a volunteer and computer whiz who set up the meeting -- many thanks, Don.

Our membership now totals 102 -- thanks for all your support. Don't worry, we have spent very little money -- just legal/start-up costs, a great CRCA banner and postage costs. We're saving most of the money for upcoming projects. And, speaking of projects, here's an update on our first partnership project with the Private Industry Council.

### THE STORM DRAIN STENCILING PROJECT

The first phase of the project is complete. Forming an alliance with the Private Industry Council, CRCA members joined students in the Business Adventure summer program and systematically painted pollution warnings on storm sewers in Fort Myers. The storm drains were stenciled with the message, "DON'T POLLUTE; FLOWS TO RIVER". Approximately 300 sewers were stenciled in the areas from the RIVER to Victoria on the south and east of the CALOOSAHATCHEE bridge to Fowler Street, and on Palm Beach Blvd. from I-75 to York Street.

The youths remained enthusiastic about the project, even with the 90 degree temperatures. After each morning of stenciling, the students performed at lab to demonstrate how pollutants such as oil, pesticides and fertilizers affect the appearance, odor, and texture of fresh water. Students realized the importance of their public service work from this lab, as well as from the numerous individuals who stopped them as they worked to commend them on their efforts.

Experimentation with four different types of stencil material revealed fiberglass to be the most stable, easiest to clean and maintain, and most cost effective. Since there are still many storm drains to paint throughout Lee County and in Hendry and Monroe Counties, stencil quality is important. Phase II of the CRCA storm drain stenciling involves expansion of the project to include service organizations, neighborhood groups, school children and other volunteers who can paint the stenciled message on storm sewers in their chosen location. SO -- CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS WHO WANT TO ASSIST OR HELP COORDINATE THE NEXT PHASE OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT RIVER PROJECT. CALL PROJECTS AT 433-INFO - DIAL CRCA AND LEAVE A MESSAGE ON OPTION #4 - PROJECTS & EVENTS.

The News-Press has been covering the project with some nice press coverage --- "River Relief Picks Up Steam" and "River Advocates Paint Way To Airwaves". This last story by Kevin Lollar wrote about "those paint happy kids" being one of the subjects of an educational video. The 15-minute video is a direct result of an Environmental Protection Agency educational grant to the Calusa Nature Center and Ostego Bay Foundation. The purpose of the video is to educate the public on the ecological, economic and health issues surrounding freshwater flow into the Gulf of Mexico. A big thanks to Kevin for the great press coverage!

#### EARLY NOTICE OF A OCTOBER RIVER PROJECT

The CRCA will be working in conjunction with some other area groups to host the Third Annual Marine Clean-Up Day. Dave Westra, a member, has been involved in this project for the last two years with Keep Lee County Beautiful. The event will consist of cleaning up garbage and other debris from the coastal waters of the CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER from the mouth east to the Ortona Locks. This year's event will be held on Sunday, October 22, 1995 from "safe light" in the morning until approximately 1:00 PM. Following the clean-up, a barbecue will be hosted for all volunteers. If you have any questions or are interested in obtaining a sign-up sheet, please call the CRCA hotline number at 433-INFO, then dial CRCA. Please leave a message for the Project & Events Committee (Option #4) and someone will call you back. More details will be available at a later date. HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO HELP THE RIVER -- PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 22 --- WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

"WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM" by Lynn MacDonald

Here are some excerpts from a very worthwhile article written for "URBAN FORESTS" (March/April 1995).

Clean up and work days are the inspirational part of...restoration..."It's a great sense of participation and accomplishment. The hard part is the ability to attend and endure endless meetings. Getting involved in the system is time-consuming, frustrating work, and you don't always win". Always remember, "drop by drop, stream by stream, (river by river) changing attitudes and growing activism are helping to restore the network of flowing waters that link us all".

Well, our first NEWSLETTER comes to an end along with my first Microsoft/Word document! Anyone having material suitable for this Newsletter, please call 433-INFO, membership, and leave a message. Looking forward to seeing all of you at our next project.

Contributors: Pam Bowman, Laura Church, Don Skiba. Editor: Connie Holsinger